

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /060 W
-----005872 131226Z /23

R 131200Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 29
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, EI, UK
SUBJECT: FURTHER REACTIONS TO REACTIONS TO LYNCH'S JANUARY 8
RADIO REMARKS ON NORTHERN IRELAND

REF: DUBLIN 072

1. SUMMARY: THE FLURRY CAUSED BY LYNCH'S JANUARY 8 INTERVIEW HAS DIED DOWN HERE. THE PUBLIC AND VIRTUALLY ALL NEWSPAPERS IN THE REPUBLIC ARE STRONGLY SUPPORTING LYNCH. WE INTERPRET THE QUOTE CLARIFICATION UNQUOTE STATEMENT AS AN ATTEMPT BY LYNCH TO EASE THE SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

2. AS OF THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 12, THE IMBROGLIO CAUSED BY PRIME MINISTER JACK LYNCH'S JANUARY 8 RADIO INTERVIEW AND THE STRONG REACTION TO IT IN BELFAST AND LONDON, APPEARS TO BE PLAYED OUT. ALL FOUR IRISH MORNING DAILY NEWSPAPERS RALLIED ROUND LYNCH. SINCE NOON ON MONDAY THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC CRITICISM OF HIM. OPPOSITION LEADERS FITZGERALD AND CLUSKEY HAVE BEEN NOTICEABLY SILENT SINCE MONDAY.

3. WE TALKED WITH THE BRITISH DCM AND POLITICAL OFFICER,
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AND THEY APPEARED AS TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY THIS SUDDEN CONTROVERSY AS EVERYONE ELSE. THEY HAVE RECOMMENDED THAT LONDON COOL IT, ADVICE WHICH ROY MASON'S LOW-KEY REMARKS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS YESTERDAY WOULD INDICATE HMG ACCEPTED. AS WE SEE IT FROM HERE THE GOI NEITHER WANTS NOR SEES ANY POINT TO A CONFRONTATION. WE INTERPRET LYNCH'S CLARIFICATION STATEMENT (REFTEL) AS AN

ATTEMPT TO COOL IT, THOUGH IN IRISH EYES IT CAN ALSO
STAND AS A PROUD, NO-BACKDOWN STATEMENT.

4. LYNCH'S CLARIFICATION STATEMENT SEEMS TO DO ITS
BEST TO DISPOSE OF THE AMNESTY FURORE BY SAYING THAT
IT WAS A HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT
HAS NO PRESENT INTENTION TO PROPOSE AN AMNESTY. HE
THEN POINTED TO HIS GOVERNMENT'S FIRM RECORD ON ANTI-
IRA SECURITY MEASURES. ON POWER-SHARING, HE ASSERTED
THAT IT HAS BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED AND ACCEPTED BY BRITISH
GOVERNMENTS OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

5. INTERESTINGLY, THE CLARIFICATION STATEMENT MADE NO
MENTION OF A BRITISH DECLARATION OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW.
THE QUOTE DECLARATION OF INTENT UNQUOTE HAS BEEN FIANNA
FAIL POLICY SINCE 1975. JACK LYNCH CHOSE TO DOWNGRADE
IT PUBLICLY BOTH IN HIS CAMPAIGN AND SINCE HE HAS TAKEN
OFFICE. IT IS NOT TRUE, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAS COM-
PLEATELY IGNORED THE POINT IN PUBLIC. WE HAVE COME
UPON THE TEXT OF AN INTERVIEW HE GAVE TO AN IRISH
JOURNALIST JUST AFTER HIS MEETING WITH CALLAGHAN IN
WHICH HE SAID THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND BRITISH PEOPLE
SHOULD DECLARE THEIR INTEREST IN A UNITED IRELAND, AND
THAT A DECLARATION OF INTENT IS A REASONABLE CONSEQUENCE
OF SUCH AN INTEREST. HE DID SAY LATER IN THE SAME
INTERVIEW THAT HE HAD NOT MADE THE POINT TO CALLAGHAN,
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AND WOULD CHOOSE HIS OWN TIME TO DO SO. SINCE THEN,
HE HAS REFRAINED FROM MAKING THE FORMAL REQUEST OF HMG
AND UNTIL JANUARY 8 HAS NOT REFERRED TO IT AGAIN IN PUBLIC.

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USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /060 W

-----005909 131225Z /23

R 131200Z JAN 78

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6. NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS HAVE SUPPORTED LYNCH AND RE-BUFFED BRITISH AND UNIONIST CRITICISMS IN VIGOROUS TERMS. THE NORMALLY URBANE IRISH TIMES: QUOTE DEAR ME (TITLE). TO JUDGE BY SOME OF THE REACTION, THE TAOISEACH MIGHT WELL HAVE PROPOSED AN ALGERIAN SOLUTION TO THE NORTH, SO LOUD AND SO LONG HAS BEEN THE FUSS. HE DIDN'T OF COURSE; HE JUST REITERATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF POLICY, AND, AS THE RECORD SHOWS, WAS CIRCUMSPECT, LEVEL-HEADED AND AUTHORITATIVE ... IDEALLY, IN THE MINDS OF SOME BRITISH AND UNIONIST POLITICIANS, A TAOISEACH SHOULD NEVER STATE HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ... BRITISH CHARGRIN MAY WELL BE BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN FLUSHED OUT OF THE CORNER WHERE THEY WERE BURYING THE CONCEPT OF POWER-SHARING (QUIETLY, AS THEY HAD HOPED). UNQUOTE

7. THE IRISH PRESS, EXPECTEDLY (IT IS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF FIANNA FAIL), ASSERTED THAT THE BRITISH MISINTERPRETED LYNCH'S REMARKS THROUGH QUOTE MALICE, STUPIDITY (AND) RELIANCE ON SECOND-HAND REPORTS UNQUOTE. THE IRISH INDEPENDENT, SOMETIMES MILDLY CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT, WROTE OF QUOTE THE HYSTERIA IN THE NORTH...THIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HYSTERIA WAS SUCH A CONTRIVED ACT THAT IT RECEIVED NO SYMPATHY IN THE SOUTH...UNQUOTE

8. ALL THE EDITORIALS MENTIONED ABOVE APPEARED JANUARY 11. THE SUBJECT THEN DISAPPEARED FROM THE EDITORIAL COLUMNS. THE ONLY COMMENT ON JANUARY 12 WAS IN THE IRISH TIMES COLUMN BY LEFT-WING, ICONOCLASTIC CLAUD COCKBURN. HE COMMENTED SARDONICALLY ON THE SHOCK EFFECT PRODUCED WHEN A STATESMAN SAYS SOMETHING IN REASONABLY CLEAR TERMS. QUOTE THIS SHOCK EFFECT WAS PARTICULARLY NOTABLE IN BRITISH REACTIONS TO THE LYNCH INTERVIEW. LONDON COMMENTATORS JUMPED AND TWITCHED AS THOUGH THE TAOISEACH HAD COMMITTED SOME ACT OF PUBLIC INDECENCY... THOSE PEOPLE ARE OUTRAGED NOT ONLY BY THIS OR THAT ASPECT OF IRISH POLICY, BUT BY WHAT THEY SEE AS THE AUDACIOUS IMPUDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC DARING TO HAVE ANY FOREIGN POLICY AT ALL. UNQUOTE SHANNON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DUBLIN00084
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780020-0347
Format: TEL
From: DUBLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780166/aaaacdtx.tel
Line Count: 169
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9028fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 DUBLIN 72
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3778956
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER REACTIONS TO REACTIONS TO LYNCH'S JANUARY 8 RADIO REMARKS ON NORTHERN IRELAND
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, EI, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9028fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014